

WARGO NATURE CENTER PRESENTS

WILDLIFE WEEK

The natural world is broken into different kingdoms - such as the plant kingdom, fungi kingdom, animal kingdom, and more. We will be exploring the animal kingdom, focusing on different animal groups that can be found in Minnesota. Each day will have a different group of animals - mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, and amphibians, with unique learning activities to help you get better acquainted with these animals.



WILDLIFE WEEK

DAY 1

MAMMALS

Mammals are vertebrates (animals with a backbone) that have fur or hair, are endothermic or warm-blooded (they have internal control of their body temperature), give birth to live young, and feed milk to their young. Minnesota has 77 mammal species. Read more about the species here: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mammals/index.html>

TRACK AND SIGN

Tracks are the footprints that animals leave behind while signs are any other evidence of animal activity, like scat, chew marks, animal homes, and much more. We can look at tracks and signs to peek into the life of the animals in our backyard.

Today's activity is to find and identify some mammal tracks and signs. Explore your backyard, a local park, or other space where wildlife might move through. Areas with muddy, bare, or sandy soil are often easier to find tracks in than grassy areas.

Try to find evidence of at least two different species of mammals. If you find tracks, draw what you see. If you find animal signs, like scat (animal poop) or a nest, draw it and try to see what it is made of or what is in it. (Without touching the scat of course)

TRACK IDENTIFICATION TIPS

Number of toes

Does the animal have 2, 4, or 5 toes? Does it have the same number of toes on the front and hind feet?

Two Toes - Deer and other hooved animals, ungulates, have 2 toes (except horses, which show one toe)

Four Toes - Cats and dog walk on their fingertips and show 4 toes

Four and Five Toes - Rodents have 4 toes on the front feet and 5 on their hind (back) feet. Rabbits and hares have 5 toes on the front and 4 on the hind.

Five Toes - Weasels, bears, racoons and other animals that walk on their palms.

Size

Measure your track. A porcupine track has a similar shape to a black bear track but is much smaller (3-4 inches vs. 8 inches).

Overall shape

Draw a real or imaginary circle around the track. Is the overall shape a circle, oval, or triangle? For example, cats and dogs both show 4 toes, but the overall shape of a cat's track is a circle compared to an oval for a dog.



Claws, webbing, and/or hair

Claws, webbing or hair showing in a track can be a big clue to identify an animal. For example, beavers and otters have webbed



WILDLIFE WEEK

DAY 2

BIRDS

Birds are great animals to study because you can find them nearly everywhere, in your back yard, in big cities, and out in the wilderness. What is a bird? Birds are animals with a backbone that have feathers, are endothermic (warm-blooded), have a beak with no teeth, have young that are hatched from eggs, most can fly, and most have hollow bones.

Learning bird calls can be challenging, but a lot can be learned just from listening to and observing birds, even without knowing all the species. A useful way to become more aware of what is around you is with a sound map.

TRY THE FOLLOWING SOUND MAP ACTIVITY

Find a good spot in your yard, local park or even by a window to be your "sit spot."

A sound map is a quiet activity that will help you focus on the sounds that occur in your sit spot. Focusing on sound will help you pick out different bird calls and learn to differentiate them. You will need a piece of paper, a pencil, and a hard surface to write on.

On your paper, mark the middle of a page with a symbol to represent you.

When you hear a sound, make a mark on the paper to represent the sound. The mark should indicate the direction and distance of the sound from you. Make a simple mark for each sound. Making simple marks keeps the focus on listening.

If it helps, close your eyes while listening for sounds.

Sit and listen for 5-10 minutes, marking your sound map as you go along.

Once you are done, consider the following

What sounds were most familiar?
What sound had you not heard before?
Do you know what made the sound?
Did you notice different bird sounds?
How many different types of birds do you think there were?

COMMON BIRD VOCALIZATIONS

Robin: "cheerio cheery me cherry me"

Blue Jay: "jay, jay, jay"

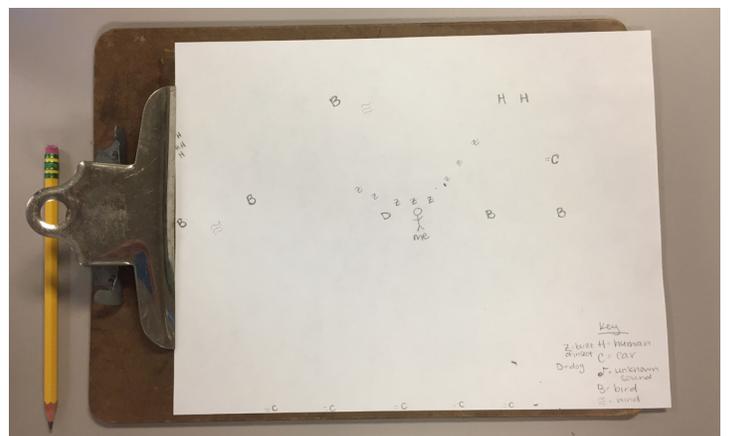
Eastern Wood Pewee: "pee-a-wee peeoh"

Eastern Bluebird: "chiti WEEW wewidoo"

Black capped Chickadee: "chick-a-dee-dee-dee" or "feeee-beeee"

Goldfinch: "potato chip - potato chip"

White-breasted nuthatch: "yank - yank"



WILDLIFE WEEK

DAY 3

INSECTS

Insects are animals without backbones (invertebrates) that are ectothermic (cold blooded), hatch from eggs, have an exoskeleton, have six legs and three main body segments (head, thorax, abdomen), have wings, and have specialized sensing organs (e.g. antennae).

Insects belong to a larger group, Arthropoda, which includes things such as spiders and crabs. Field guides can be very useful for identifying insects and other arthropods, as there are large numbers of species. Many excellent field guides are available for sale.

Here are a few free online resources that might help:

<https://www.insectidentification.org/insects-by-state.asp?thisState=Minnesota>

<http://www.minnesotaseasons.com/Main/Insects.html>

Today's challenge is to go on an insect hunt.

Your goal is to see what insects you can find. It is okay to not identify the exact species. Try rolling over logs and rocks to see what you find below. Be sure to put everything back where you found it! Try searching in tall grasses and near trees or buildings.

Did you find different insects in different areas?

Can you figure out which group your insects or other arthropods belong to (flies, beetles, moths, spiders, etc.)?

What stands out about the insects you found?

Try drawing or describing your insects. Give them a name that you think fits them if you can't find out their name.

INSECT DRAWING



WILDLIFE WEEK

DAY 4

REPTILES

Reptiles are animals with backbones (vertebrates) that are ectothermic (cold-blooded), have scaly skin, and lay eggs. Minnesota is home to 27 species of reptiles, including snakes, turtles, and lizards. They are different from amphibians, which will be covered in tomorrow's activities.

Today your challenge is to find some reptile species in your area. Venomous snakes are very rare in Minnesota and only found in the very southeast part of the state. However, you should always be respectful of wildlife and give animals space.

Here are some tips for finding reptiles:

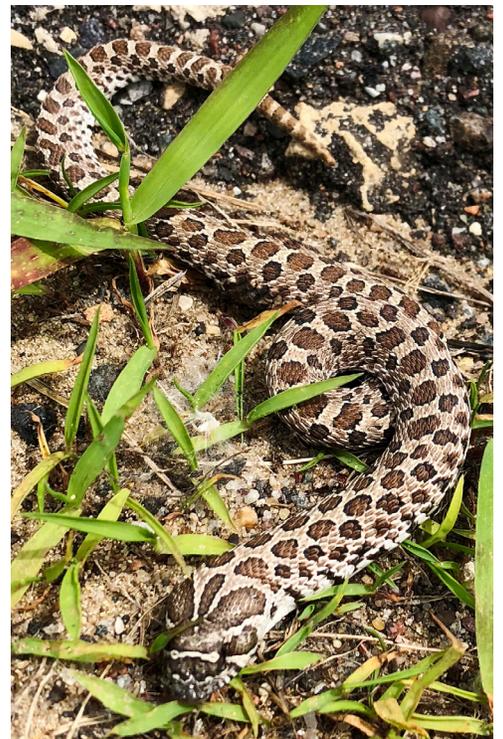
Check good sunning areas like brick walls, rock or wood piles, sidewalks and driveway. Also, check underneath logs, if you do roll logs, roll them away from you. This will give any animals room to run away. Paved areas (such as sidewalks) hold heat into the evening. Check these areas as the sun goes down as they will continue to stay warm as the air cools, which will attract reptiles such as snakes. If you are by a lake, pond, or river check logs or rocks for turtles.

How many species did you find?

Which group of reptiles was easiest to find?

Learn more about Minnesota's reptile species here:

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/reptiles_amphibians/index.html



WILDLIFE WEEK

DAY 5

AMPHIBIANS

Amphibians are animals with backbones (vertebrates) that are ectothermic (cold-blooded), have smooth and often slimy skin, and lay eggs in water. Minnesota is home to 19 species of reptiles, including frogs and salamanders. They are different from reptiles who lay their eggs on land and have scaly skin.

The activity for today is to listen to frog calls and see how many you can identify.

Frog species call at different times of the year, so not all may be present at a given time.

WHEN CAN YOU HEAR FROG CALLS?

Species	Early March	Late March	Early April	Late April	Early May	Late May	Early June	Late June	Early July	Late July
Wood Frog		X	X	X						
Boreal Chorus Frog		X	X	X						
Spring Peeper			X	X	X					
Northern Leopard Frog			X	X	X					
Pickerel Frog					X	X				
American Toad					X	X	X			
Canadian Toad						X	X			
Great Plains Toad						X	X			
Gray Treefrog						X	X	X		
Cope's Gray Treefrog						X	X	X		
Northern Cricket Frog						X	X	X		
Mink Frog							X	X	X	
Green Frog							X	X	X	
Bullfrog							X	X	X	

WILDLIFE WEEK

DAY 5 - CONTINUED

You can listen to frog calls here:

<https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/frogquiz/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.lookup>

You can try an online quiz to test your frog ID skills. Select "Minnesota" in the dropdown menu to see if you can identify the Minnesota frogs in the recording.

<https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/frogquiz/index.cfm?fuseaction=publicQuiz.StartPublicQuiz>

Here are some descriptions of different frog or toad calls you might hear that may help in your identification:

American Toad: Call a trill sounds like BRRREEEEEEEEEE, BRRREEEEEEEEEE

Western Chorus Frog: Sounds like running fingers down a comb or a crEEEE, crEEEE, crEEE

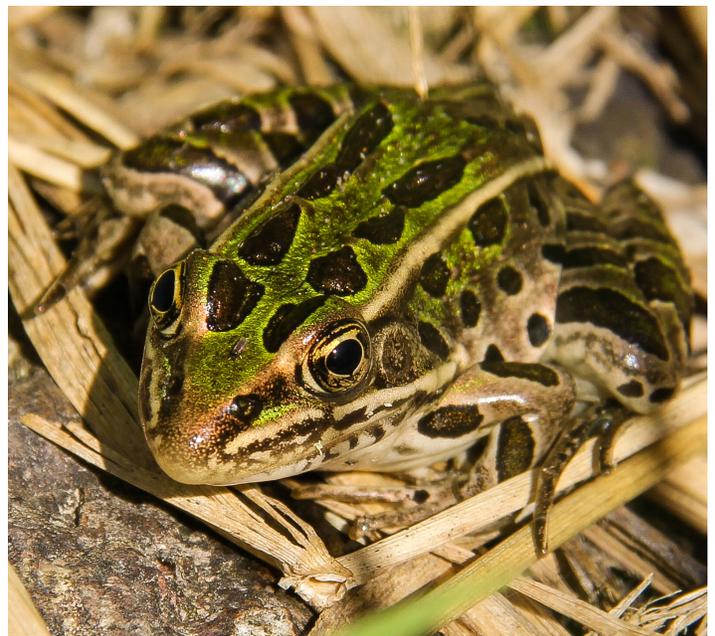
Wood Frog: Sounds like a chuckle

Spring Peeper: Call short PEEP, PEEP, PEEP

Eastern Gray Treefrog: birdlike trill

Northern Leopard: Deep snoring sound

Bullfrog: Sounds like blowing over the opening of a bottle- rrr-uum, rrr-uum or jug-o-rum



WILDLIFE WEEK

OWL CRAFT

Supplies

Cardboard roll (toilet paper roll)

Markers

Construction paper(optional)

Glue(optional)

Feathers(optional)

Instructions

Take your cardboard roll and fold in the top edges to form ears. Use your markers to draw eyes and a beak. Then draw some feathers on the belly and wings on the sides.

If your crafter helper is older and would like to cut out and glue the eyes, beak, and feathers on, this is a great craft to help with fine-motor skills.

Get Creative

Add feathers if you have them. Make more forest friends like a fox or bear!



WNC WILDLIFE CAMP BOOKLIST

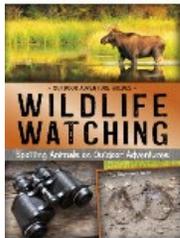
All these books can be checked out at your local Anoka County Library

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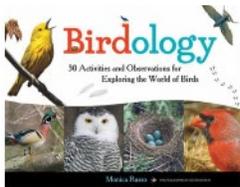
Ideas, Information, Inspiration.



Wildlife Watching: spotting animals on outdoor adventures

Raymond Bean

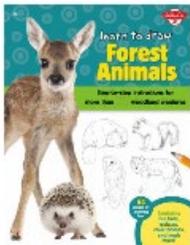
Binoculars, camera, action! This handy guidebook provides basic tips and tricks for wildlife spotting and nature photography, including recognizing animal signs, essential gear, and wildlife dos and don'ts.



Birdology: 30 activities and observations for exploring the world of birds

Monica Russo

Provides thirty activities that encourage bird watching and observation in parks, zoos, farms, and backyards, and includes discussions on migration, nesting, food, territories, and wildlife preservation.



Learn to draw forest animals: step-by-step instructions for more than 25 woodland creatures

Elizabeth T. Gilbert

Presents detailed instructions for drawing a variety of animals, discussing tools, materials, and the use of basic shapes in drawing technique.



National Geographic illustrated guide to wildlife: from your back door to the great outdoors: mammals, birds, reptiles & amphibians, aquatic life, insects & spiders.

National Geographic Society

From one of the most trusted names in field guides comes a new and lavishly illustrated guide to identifying North America's most common birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, and amphibians, plus fish and other aquatic creatures. Broad in scope and clearly organized, National Geographic Illustrated Guide to Wildlife is just like having five field guides in one

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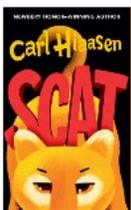
Ideas, Information, Inspiration.



Wildfire

W.R. Philbrick

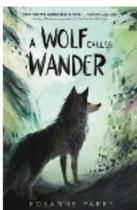
Flames race toward Sam Castine's summer camp as evacuation buses are loading, but Sam runs back to get his phone. Suddenly, a flash of heat blasts him as pine trees explode. Now a wall of fire separates Sam from his bus, and there's only one thing to do, run for his life. Run or die. Lungs burning, Sam's only goal is to keep moving. Drought has made the forest a tinderbox, and Sam struggles to remember survival tricks he learned from his late father. Then, when he least expects it, he encounters Delphy, an older girl who is also lost. Their unlikely friendship grows as they join forces to find civilization. The pace never slows, and eventually, flames surround Sam and Delphy on all sides. A powerful bond is forged that can only grow out of true hardship, as two true friends beat all odds and outwit one of the deadliest fires ever.



Scat

Carl Hiaasen

Nick and his friend Marta decide to investigate when a mysterious fire starts near a Florida wildlife preserve and an unpopular teacher goes missing.



A Wolf Called Wander

Roseanne Parry

A young wolf cub, separated from his pack, journeys 1000 miles across the Pacific Northwest, dealing with forest fires, hunters, highways, and hunger before finding a new home. Based on the true story of a wolf called OR-7



The Wild Robot

Peter Brown

Roz the robot discovers that she is alone on a remote, wild island with no memory of where she is from or why she is there, and her only hope of survival is to try to learn about her new environment from the island's hostile inhabitants.